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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *April* 20. 1695.

Queſt. 1. *GEntlemen, having found your endeavours hitherto in the anſwering of queſtions to be chiefly intended for the publick benefit, and particular ſervice of your queriſts, I am willing to think you have been impoſed upon in a late queſtion ſent you about a Vicaridge in the Dioceſs of* Glouceſter-ſhire, *and that you wou'd not deſignedly publiſh any ſuch falſe account; having ſome reſpect for you, and being ſenſible of the malice of this falſe ſtory, knowing my ſelf the true ground, if the queriſt had any, upon which all this was founded; which I have ſent you, and leave to you to right your ſelves and the truth as you ſhall think moſt proper.*

The town meant muſt be Wotton Under-edge, *in this ſame Dioceſs, which may poſſibly have* 2000 *inhabitants, but probably not a quarter ſo many communicants; the Vicar of this place has a Rectory about ten miles from it, in the ſame Dioceſs, and on the account of ſome miſunderſtanding between him and his people of* Wotton, *he became uncapable of doing any good by his miniſtry amongſt them, and had ſome time ſince a diſpenſation, during pleaſure, for reſiding upon his Rectory. But a Curate was then ſetled at* Wotton, *whom the Pariſhioners well approved of; and he was allowed by the Reverend Biſhop all the Vicarige dues, beſides twenty pounds a year out of a Penſion of about Forty Three Pounds* per annum, *from* Chriſt Church *in* Oxford, *beſides a farther Encouragement from the Voluntary* contribution *of the people. Nor has the* Vicar *any more allowed to him, than what Remains of that Penſion from* Chriſt Church, *and the Rent of the* Vicaridge Houſe. *And I dare* farther *be poſitive, that 'tis ſo far from being any thing of a* Truth, *that the* Reverend Biſhop *has not* heard one word of the Curate's leaving the place; *which would be* very improbable, *from a Town left in ſuch* Circumſtances, *and eſpecially where ſo many are concerned.*

Anſw. We return you many thanks Sir, for undeceiving us in a matter of this nature, and think we are obliged to do as much to every one, only farther wiſhing, we cou'd have as good an account, who the malicious ill deſigning queriſt was, that we might make every one ſenſible, what he deſerves; ſuch men who under a pretence of repreſenting grievances where there are none, ſlily to inſinuate falſe accuſations, meriting the juſt hatred of every body, and ought to be branded as enemies to mankind. But this perſon has been as fooliſh as wicked, if he intended any Reflection upon the Reverend Biſhop, every body who knows him being acquainted with his extraordinary Zeal and Piety, and how ready and ſolicitous upon all accounts he has been to promote a reformation.

Queſt. 2. *When the ſpiritual power of God upon the Soul is a ſpiritual Life in it, Qu. Whether ſin and corruption can ever prevail, becauſe the* Spirit *of* God *is* God; *and he that is born of God cannot* ſin; *And the work of God is for ever, his ſtrength never fails; and the* power *and* wiſdom *of God cannot be ſubject to ſin, or overcome by it.*

Anſw. By the ſpiritual power of God, and ſpiritual Life of the Soul, if the queriſt underſtands what he writes, he muſt mean the ſame with "being born of God, in the phraſe of the Apoſtle; or that particular aid and aſſiſtance of Gods Holy Spirit which works an entire change in the mind, and turns men from Evil to Good, being a new principle of action in them. But notwithſtanding this, it's certain from Gods word, "that there's none doth Good and Sins not, and that if we ſay we have no ſin ('twas an Apoſtle who wrote it, and ſeveral of the Apoſtles we know were guilty of great ſins, even after their Converſion) we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us. But how then ſhall we reconcile theſe Scriptures with one another? One ſays "he that is born of God cannot ſin, and the other "there is none lives, and ſins not: The general ſtream of interpreters we find explain this phraſe ſinneth not, and cannot ſin; by that in the 8th and 9th. "He that committeth ſin, and whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin; that is, doth not ſin habitually, or deliberately, and reſolvedly, ſo as to continue in it, as the Devil is ſaid to do. v. 8. The Devil ſinneth from the beginning, not only was once guilty of ſin, but ſtands to it, and continues in it, which whoever does, 'tis eaſy to know who's his Father. Nor does God ſo far change the mind as to unman his Creature or take away that root of Liberty which is as eſſential to him as his very reaſon. If he did, certainly there wou'd be no need of that caution, that we ſhou'd "work out our own ſalvation with Fear and Trembling. After all, if there be ſuch a man, in nature, nay if there ever has been any meer man who has thus liv'd without ſinning, let thoſe who believe ſuch a thing poſſible, produce his name, and they'll do more then ever yet was done.

Queſt. 3. *How many years, according to the exacteſt Computation of Time muſt it be, before the fall of* Antichriſt *and his* Kingdom.

Anſw. And do you think this a fair Queſtion? If you do, you muſt give us leave to profeſs our ſelves not Prophets enough to anſwer it, being warn'd by the Fate of many perſons of no contemptible Learning, who have all ſplit upon this Rock, and expos'd themſelves by fixing the Times and the Seaſons, which 'tis not for them to know, and which the Father has put in his own power; not that we'd hereby diſcourage "the mind that has wiſdom, from enquiring into what is reveal'd, and ſurely not in vain, but the difficulty of the Interpretation ſhou'd make men modeſt in their deciſions, and neither overconfident of their own notions, how pretty ſoever, nor angry with thoſe who can't be of the ſame opinion. We ſhall add more on this Head after we have obſerv'd the prudence of the Church of *Rome* in this matter, who ſhou'd know as much of *Antichriſt* as other folks. And their Writers generally fix his very coming but three years and a half before the end of the world; That men may be ſure not to look for him ſooner.

Queſt. 4. *And if there was but one* Sibyl, *was ſhe not very long liv'd, what was her Name and Country, the place of her abode, and whether ſhe did not dwell in a Cave?*

Anſw. Thoſe Authors who have believed there was but one *Sybil*, have endeavoured to inform themſelves of all theſe things, and have likewiſe given an account of them to others. They think that *Lucian* very improperly omitted her in his Catalogue of thoſe who lived a long time, and ſay ſhe was very old when ſhe dyed. To make which appear the more probable, they affirm the kind of life which the *Sybil* led was very fit to make her arrive to extream old Age, becauſe contemplation does not diſſipate the ſpirits ſo much as labour and the common employments of men, beſides ſhe took much pleaſure, and never fatigued her ſelf with any thing; and that an habitation under ground,

ground, together with the moſt ſimple food, are moſt healthful to ſuch as are accuſtomed to it, as may be ſeen by the example of the firſt *Hermits* who generally lived to a great Age. Some have thought that the *Sybil* made uſe of *Magic* to preſerve her health; but further add, that this Art was nothing but a knowledge of the ſurprizing effects which the mixture of ſimples and minerals produced. Her name is ſaid to be *Herophile*, and her native Country *Erythrea*, an *Ionian* Town in the leſſer *Aſia*, and a *Greek Colony* planted by the *Erythreans*, who dwelt between *Thebes* and *Megara*. They ſuppoſe the original of the names which have been given her, proceeded from the Voyages ſhe made; and ſhew that the *Sibyls*, *Cumæa* and *Cumana*, was one woman only, whoſe Oracles was a long time after preſented by an old woman to *Tarquin* the proud. And that this was the ſame of whom *Æneus* ſpeaks in the Sixth *Encid* of *Virgil*. The firſt *Cave* the *Sibyl* dwelt in was near a mountain in the Territories of *Erythrea*, where the inhabitants of the place ſay ſhe was born. But the Cave of *Cumes*, which has her habitation for ſo long a time, is not leſs famous, if it were but for the fine deſcription which *Virgil* gives of it.

Exciſum Euboica latus ingens rupis in antrum,
Quo lati ducunt aditus centum, oſtia centum.
Unde ruunt totidem voces reſponſa Sibylla.

Juſtin Martyr in the exhortation he adreſſes to the Gentiles, affirms that he has himſelf ſeen this Cave, that it reſembled a great Palace cut in a Rock, that in the middle there were three hollow places of the ſame Rock which were uſed to be fill'd with water, and there the *Sibyl* waſhed her ſelf, before ſhe aſcended a kind of a Throne, from whence ſhe deliver'd her Oracles. He alſo aſſures us that ſhe dyed and was bury'd at *Cumes* in *Italy*, where he tells us he has ſeen her Tomb.

☞ *The Undertakers of the* Royal Academies, *having met with great Incouragement from his Majeſty, as alſo by the advancement of a conſiderable ſum of money upon it, have reſolved to draw the 25th of this Inſtant* April; *and thoſe that come not in by that time, will loſe conſiderable advantages.* Tickets and Propoſals at large, with a Poſtſcript in Vindication thereof, may be had at the following places, *viz.* Mr. *Gilliflower* in *Weſtminſter-hall*, Mr. *Chapman* at the *Angel* in the *Pall-mall*, Mr. *Partharidge* near *Charing-croſs*, Mr. *Sanders* in the *New-Exchange*; Mr. *Lowns* over againſt *Exeter Exchange*; Mr. *Briſcoe* in *Ruſſel-ſtreet*, *Covent-Garden*; Mr. *Brown* at the *Bible* without *Temple Bar*; Mr. *Keeble* at the *Turk's-Head* in *Fleetſtreet*; Mr. *Harriſon* at *Lincoln's-Inn-Gate*; Mr. *Sare* at *Grays-Inn-Gate*; Mr. *Baitman* in *Middle-Row*, and Mr. *Baitman* at the *Bible*, both in *Holborn*; Mr. *Bennet* at the *Half-Moon*, Mr. *Evates* at the *Green-Dragon*, both in St. *Paul's* Church Yard; Mr. *Hindmarſh* at the *Golden-Ball* over againſt the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*; Mr. *Guilliam* near the *Sun-Yard* in *Biſhopſgate-ſtreet*, all Bookſellers; Mr. *Place* Stationer at *Furnivals-Inn-Gate*; and Mr. *Davis* at the Paper Warehouſe in *Henrietta-ſtreet*, in *Covent-Garden*.

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